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SEPTEMBER,
1893.

VOL
10

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

PART 57.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 245.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1893. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THROUGH THE RANKS.

By MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.
(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.)

Author of "Aunt Hepsy's Foundling," "My Land of Beulah,"
"Bonnie Kate," "The Peyton Romance," etc., etc.

CHAPTER II. ENSIGN GREEN IS "BLESSED."

LEFT to his own solitary reflections, Edward Pouncefort Green sat bolt up on his camp bedstead—that desirable article of furniture giving a loud creak of remonstrance—stared after the retreating figure of Colour-Sergeant number one company, and then went on staring at the door through which he had passed.

After thus ruminating for a while, he gave utterance to the following remarkable ejaculation:

"Well—I'm blessed!"

His present condition and situation hardly seemed to bear out such an assertion, for his nose—always too big for his face—was rapidly swelling to abnormal dimensions, as he ascertained by squinting at it hard with both eyes.

In spite of this untoward circumstance he again repeated the conviction that he was "blessed," kneaded his pillow into more comfortable shape, and lay listening to the band now gaily playing the "Young Recruit," as though no such thing as a whipping-post existed in the British Army, while Private Deacon, with his shirt thrown over his discoloured shoulders, marched across to the hospital between two orderlies, keeping step and time to the music, and with a half-smile upon his pallid lips.

Presently the fellows began to drop in upon Ensign Green. Parade was dismissed; the band played no more, and

the birds had it all their own way in the sunshine.

"You've been and gone and done it, young 'un, you have," said Lieutenant Blizzard, sitting astride a barrack-room chair and observing Mr. Green's nose with great disfavour. "Got knocked over, eh, and all that sort of thing?"

"Queer in the head, you know. Things went jumping around with me; but I'm all right now. I'm as right as a trivet now."

Mr. Green had arisen from his creaking couch and was lounging in a chair formed by a cunning arrangement of straps and sticks, and, like the bath, warranted to pack up anywheres or nowheres.

At this juncture the surgeon looked in—a man much thought of in the one hundred and ninety-third, and whose word had no small weight with the youngsters—with the elders too, for matter of that.

"All right, eh?" he said in a voice that told his native country lay beyond the Tweed. "None the worse for your tumble, Green?"

Mr. Green pointed ruefully to his nose.

"You'll not die of that," said the doctor, smiling.

"N-o," said the sufferer; "but I was going to Major Henneker's to-night."

His face grew so long as he spoke, his looks so miserable, that there was a loud guffaw at his expense.

"Tis a piece of raw beefsteak on to it—isn't that a capital thing, doctor?" said Lieutenant Blizzard gravely.

"Admirable—the best thing on the face of the earth," replied the doctor, as he donned his cocked hat and feathers, and set off across the square.

By this time two more men—one tall and dark-eyed, the other thick-set and short, with a fierce moustache, hair like

bristles, and a snub nose—had come in. The taller one, Captain Hugh Dennison, looked grave.

"I tell you what it is," he said, stretching out his arms and letting them fall at his sides; "I'm glad that job's over; every word that fellow said seemed to hit me hard. I don't know what the rest of you thought about it."

"But them's your sentiments," put in the fierce little warrior by his side, "and they do you proud, Dennison, and that's all about it."

It was easy to see that under the cloak of his usual droll and jesting manner, the speaker concealed some feeling akin to the gravity of Captain Dennison; while young Blizzard, whose long nose and somewhat retreating chin gave him no little resemblance to a bird, glanced sharply from one to the other.

"You're keeping something back, you fellows. I know you are," said Ensign Green, "and I bust say it's deuced bean of you," he added, mauling his words dreadfully in consequence of the blocked state of his nose; "I've bist something worth hearing, that's what it is, through that confounded fall of mine. Did that poor devil say anything?"

"Ay, that did he," answered Dennison quickly, glad to put some of the burden on his mind into words; "he spoke out to the chief, I can tell you. He said he'd been led astray, and had no wish to deny it; that he had sold his kit twice over and drank the money, and was sorry for it before they treated him like a dog, but that now his 'heart was broke,' and he didn't care what came of him. 'I'd the makin's of a good soldier in me,' he said, and he faced us all like a lion at bay, I can tell you. I was glad I hadn't been on the court-martial, and I wish with all my heart the 'cat' was dead and buried, or only used for gross moral crimes and not for mere folly, such as many a young soldier drifts into and is none the worse for after—such as we all drift into in our day, for matter of that, officers as well as men."

"But we don't sell our kits," put in Mr. Green feebly, and looking somewhat shamefaced.

"No, but we do worse—some of us," said Blizzard, with a penitential air. "We run up a tailor's bill for the governor to pay, and take it half in cash."

The small warrior—Verrinder by name, but known as "Chubby" by his intimates—seemed much struck by this view of the case.

"By Jove, Dennison, you're right!" he said, standing with his legs wide apart and curling up his moustache into a fiercer curve than ever.

"I know I am," said Dennison quietly; "and I should like to see the lash abolished among our soldiers. I shall see it, too, some day, if I live long enough. I can tell you, I had rather go and see a man shot—who deserved it—than see one flogged for such a petty sin as selling a blacking-brush with the broad arrow on it, as we have seen a man lashed for this morning. It only hardens a man against his fellows, takes all the heart out of him, and kills his self-respect. I think the service would be more popular with a better class of men than we get now if it were done away with."

When Hugh Dennison chose to speak it was the habit of the hundred and ninety-third to listen. Lieutenant Blizzard screwed his stringless glass laboriously into his right eye, and made himself look more like a keenly observant bird of prey than ever. Chubby rammed his hands down into the depths of his trouser pockets, and shoved his shako into a perilous angle on the back of his head. Ensign Green opened his mouth and kept it so to avoid snuffling while the (regimental) oracle spoke.

"By Jove, Dennison! you're about right," said Blizzard, contracting his eye suddenly, and with a crafty jerk dislodging his eye-glass and pocketing it.

"Of course he is," said Chubby; "but there's no fellow to blame that I see, certainly not the chief; he hates the lash, as every one may see! It's the what's-his-names who are in the wrong, you know."

"Quite so," put in Blizzard, as who should say he was glad the cap was put on the right head so satisfactorily to all parties.

At that moment a female figure, a graceful one, too, was seen crossing the square, and all, except Dennison, leaned forward to look. The red flush on Ensign Green's nose spread all over his face, even to his ears, and he breathed hard.

"Get him a fan some one, fetch him a smelling-bottle," said Blizzard, once more focussing his eye-glass and bringing it to bear upon the unhappy subaltern. "He'll get a fit of some sort if some fellow doesn't do something."

These attentions only added to the heat and confusion of Mr. Green, who, forgetting his invalid state, began to bounce about and inveigh against fate.

"I bust say it's a deuce of a shame, Blizzard, to bake fun of a lady before a lot of fellows like that. She's looking this way, I declare she is; it's bonstrous hard, this sort of thing, I can tell you."

"She's looking straight before her, as she always does," said Chubby, peering cautiously from the window; "I'd lay my life she's on some errand of mercy—helping some poor devil or another over the stones—you bet!"

"I wasn't making fun of any lady, Green; I was making fun of you, you know," put in Blizzard aggrievedly. "You shouldn't turn like a newly boiled lobster every time you catch sight of Miss Drew if you mean fellows not to chaff you, you know."

In the attention bestowed upon Mr. Green's blushing agitation at the sight of the quiet, graceful presence of Miss Allison Drew, a slight shade of pallor that crossed Hugh Dennison's dark face escaped notice. He neither peered from the window, nor stirred from his nonchalant position by the mantelshelf; but under his medals his heart beat just a little heavily. When love is deep, and strong, and true, even the sound of a name or the echo of a footstep will stir its pulses.

"She has gone to the Hospital Sergeant's quarters," said poor Mr. Green at length, after a subtle tour of observation round and about the window. "She bust have gone to ask about the child that set itself alight yesterday burning—my fellow told me it was in a bad way."

"Wherever she's gone, she wouldn't be best pleased to see you gaping after her like that—you bet!" said Chubby, tilting his shako to a correct angle over his nose, hitching his sword into position, and generally making preparations to be on the move. But, when half-way to the door, he was arrested by the almost tragic gravity with which Ensign Green—as Chubby afterwards put it—"turned another tapper on."

"Have any of you fellows noticed the new Colour-Sergeant of number one company?"

"Yes; I've noticed that he's a deuced handsome chap—wish I'd such a phiz," replied Chubby, at which there was a general roar—the speaker's style of beauty being like that of a pug-dog, mighty in proportion to its ugliness.

"Oh, yes; he's good-looking enough," continued Mr. Green; "but then, any fellow can be good-looking."

"I don't know that," put in Blizzard grimly.

"Don't be dense, old fellow," said the other; "you know what I mean."

"Hanged if I do."

"A man may be as handsome as you please, and yet be just anybody; but this fellow stumps me, I tell you. Everything about him—his voice, his way of going about things, the cut of his jib even; why, you aren't better form yourself, Dennison, and I can't say bore than that, can I?"

A murmur from Blizzard, a prompt "Certainly not. No fellow could say more than that," from Chubby, and a quiet amused smile from Hugh Dennison greeted this sally. Edward Pouncefort Green felt that he had made a social success.

"The fellow brought me in here, you know, when I got a bit off my head with the—ahem!—heat, and this confounded stock—and, by Jove! he couldn't have looked after me better if he'd been old Busters himself, and I can't say more than that—can I?"

As has been before stated, Surgeon Geoffrey John Musters was a man greatly thought of in the one hundred and ninety-third, therefore this comparison was received with unanimous approval, and Ensign Green began to think he must be born to be an orator, and that his latent talents in that line had not been properly appreciated by his family.

"I tell you what it is, when you look at that fellow's hand you feel as you wouldn't be surprised to see a signet-ring upon it; and look here, now, when he went off to fall in, I felt like saying 'thank you, old fellow,' just as if it had been you, Blizzard, or even Dennison there."

"Still, it's perhaps as well you curbed your young impulses," said Chubby, with the air of a tried and seasoned warrior who knew the value of unswerving discipline in the ranks.

"Quite so," chimed in Blizzard, ceasing to bestride his wooden steed, and beginning to buckle his armour on for a start. "However, I quite agree with you, Green, in thinking the Colour-Sergeant a very superior sort of chap. It's just like the old chief's clear-sightedness to give him his colours at once. By the way, where did he come in from?"

"From the Rifles, I think. Knows we're down for India, and wants to see service there; swapped with a man who wants to stay at home because of his wife and kids. By the way, did any of you hear

that brute Ellerton tell Coghlan to 'lay it on'! I'll lay a penny the chief didn't, or he'd catch it hot. If we were to go into action I fancy we should lose our Adjutant in the fray."

"Do you mean——" began young Mr. Green, with a face of amaze.

"I mean," continued Captain Dennison sharply, "that when an officer has managed to make himself thoroughly detested by his men, he very seldom does come alive out of action. Every bullet has its billet—so they say; but no one can question the little leaden messenger of fate."

Mr. Green thought the phrase, "little leaden messenger of fate," a thing to make a note of. He thought he might impress his family by bringing it out in a casual sort of manner. He made up his mind to write it down in his military vade mecum, when the men should be gone.

As for Lieutenant Blizzard, he screwed his glass tightly into his eye, focussed the Captain of the company, and thought to himself for the thousandth time or so: "By Jove! Where could you find such a fellow as Dennison now? I'll trouble you for any regiment in the service that can show up a better."

Chubby, for his part, delivered himself of the assertion that "there's a lot in that, you bet." And he "often felt like having a prod at old Ellerton himself" when that worthy was "showing up in his worst form."

"Which is pretty often," added Blizzard, and then every one promptly prepared to depart.

Chubby and Blizzard betook themselves to the anteroom, prior to getting out of harness and into mufti: a prolonged and arduous undertaking with both, as became their years and kind; while Captain Hugh Dennison, being on duty for the day, went across the square and through the barrack gate. As he acknowledged the salute of the sentry, his eye fell on a pitiful and beautiful figure on the other side the space where four roads meet, and one that he could not refrain from lingering to look upon. It was that of a young girl with one of those marvellous faces that are to be seen now and again among the Irish peasantry. The great eyes, lambent, and just now fierce with pain, were of the dark, deep grey of some mountain tarn above whose still depths hangs a thunder-cloud. The hair, black as ebony, rippled back from a low, square brow; the short upper lip could impart a look of fiery pride or melting tenderness.

Now the lovely mouth was twitching and trembling, and the little brown hand that held a scarlet handkerchief snooded over the head, and folded under the chin, trembled too.

Captain Dennison was reminded of a picture he had once seen called *Erin Farewell*, in which just such a lovely, troubled face looked from the canvas, telling its own tale of bitter pain.

The girl leant against a rough paling, as if for support, and her great sad eyes gazed fixedly at the barrack gate, watching, through the sheen of tears that rose and fell, watching, with longing passionate and unspeakable, for some one who should come.

Half-way down the narrow road that leads to St. Patrick's Hill, Captain Dennison turned and looked back. The agony in the beautiful face seemed to draw him. He had no conception who the girl was keeping such painful vigil for, and set to wonder what tragedy in humble life he had caught a glimpse of. As he stopped, a woman with a child in her arms stopped too.

"Shure, and it's Norah O'Connor, the craythur," she said, pointing to the waiting figure at the gate; "it's swateheart she is to the man as was flogged the mornin'—glory be to God! and bad 'cess to them as can trate a fellow-crater so—axing yer honour's pardon for spakin', seeing as you're one of the noble gentlemen yerself, and manin' no harm at all, at all, if I must spake the last word to the praste to-night."

The woman spoke with the familiar and sympathetic manner so peculiar to the peasant classes in Ireland; a familiarity that never becomes license or freedom, and permits of utterances that in others might offend.

"And there now, see ye, sir," continued the woman, "that's Miss Alison Drew—the saints make her bed in her sickness—and isn't she a blessed craythur as can feel for the poorest same as for hersel'. They won't let Norah pass the gate, and Miss Alison's bin askin' news o' the poor lad for her—see how she clips the hand of her, same as if she were one lady and her another. Ah, but there's good heretics—and bad Catholics—times about," she added, with a sly glance at the handsome captain, and so, beginning to hush up the child, went on her way.

Yet a moment Hugh Dennison lingered, then turned sharply away, while a hot flush mounted to his brow; it almost seemed to

him as if he had been guilty of a mean action in watching Alison Drew.

But the picture of the two women—Norah crouched against the paling in all the helplessness of sorrow, and Alison bending tenderly above her, lingered in his mind as something precious, holy, beautiful—a thing not to be forgotten.

CONCERNING PIPES.

MR. GOSCHEN once made, and announced to the world, a startling discovery. In the course of one of his speeches he stated that the increase of consumption of tobacco in 1890 over 1889 was equal to five hundred and sixty millions of pipes! This estimate he reached on a basis of twelve pipes for every ounce of tobacco. Now, a Chancellor of the Exchequer may be infallible in figures and finance, while it is clear that he is not infallible in pipes and tobacco. He neither described the size of bowl on which he estimated, nor the kind of tobacco supposed to be consumed. A pipeful of coarse "Irish Twist" will weigh more than a pipeful of loose, light "Birdseye," and, therefore, an ounce of the one will yield more smokes than an ounce of the other. But what of the size of the pipe?

The reference raises some considerations of much interest to smokers. It is, for instance, curious what differences exist in the size and character of the instruments employed by different nations in the consumption of tobacco. Let us take a look at some.

But, first, it may be recalled that when tobacco was first introduced into this country it was not consumed in pipes at all, but in rolled leaves in the form of rough, loose cigars. Readers of "Westward Ho" will remember the amazement which Salvation Yeo created in Devon when he pulled brown leaves out of his pocket, rolled, lighted, and sucked them, emitting great volumes of smoke. The pipe was a later institution.

Whether or not tobacco was first brought over by Sir Walter Raleigh, or Sir Francis Drake, or Sir John Hawkins, or Sir Amyas Leigh, we need not stop to enquire; but on this point it is worth noting what says "A Veracious Chronicler" of the days of Queen Anne, quoted by Kingsley:

"Whereas Mr. Lane is said to have brought home that divine weed, as Spenser well names it, from Virginia in the year 1584, it is hereby indisputable that full four

years earlier, by the bridge of Putford in the Torridge Moors (which all true smokers shall hereafter visit as a hallowed spot and point of pilgrimage) first twinkled that fiery beacon and beneficent load-star of Bidefordian commerce, to spread hereafter from port to port and peak to peak, like the watch-fires which proclaimed the coming of the Armada or the fall of Troy, even to the shores of the Bosphorus, the peaks of the Caucasus, and the farthest isles of the Malayan Sea; while Bideford, metropolis of tobacco, saw her Pool choked with Virginian traders, and the pavement of her Bridgeland Street groaning beneath the savoury bales of roll Trinidado, leaf, and pudding; and her grave burghers, bolstered and blocked out of their own houses by the scarce less savoury stock-fish casks which filled cellar, parlour, and attic, were fain to sit outside the door, a silver pipe in every strong right hand, and each left hand chucking cheerfully the doubloons deep-lodged in the auriferous caverns of their trunk-hose."

The same chronicler mentions that the best Torridge leaf was worth its weight in silver, which was doubtless an exaggeration. But the reference to silver pipes, even in these early years of tobacco in England, must be noted. They marked an immense advance upon the methods of the people from whom we derived tobacco, who, as reported by the chronicler, "When they will deliberate of war or policy, sit round in the hut of the chief: where being placed, enter to them a small boy with a cigarro of the bigness of a rolling-pin, and puffs the smoke thereof into the face of each warrior, from the eldest to the youngest; while they, putting their hand fannel-wise round their mouths, draw into the sinuosities of the brain that more than Delphic vapour of prophecy; which boy presently falls down in a swoon, and being dragged out by the heels and laid by to sober, enter another to puff at the sacred cigarro, till he is dragged out likewise, and so on till the tobacco is finished, and the seed of wisdom has sprouted in every soul into the tree of meditation, bearing the flowers of eloquence, and in due time the fruit of valiant action."

Some "heathen savages" may have practised this mode of vicarious smoking, but needless to say it was not that of the Red Indian, further north in the American Continent. Thus the Calumet, or Pipe of Peace, of the North American tribes, is passed round among the warriors in order

of rank and age—that is to say, the stem is, but the bowl remains in the centre of the circle upon a rest and charged with tobacco. The bowl is usually of red pipe-stone, a native mineral which is held sacred for this purpose, because the tradition is preserved that the Red Indian was himself originally made from this red stone.

In North America, which must be regarded as the original home of tobacco-smoking, there are other curious aboriginal forms of pipe besides the Calumet. It is probable, indeed, that Hawkins, and Raleigh, and Drake saw less of the Pipe of Peace than of the "Tomahawk Pipe," an interesting arrangement by which the warrior combines business with pleasure—the blade of the implement for work; and the handle of it, hollowed as a pipe-stem, for leisure. The Indians, however, have a great variety of pipes, and have had for many centuries, to judge from the specimens which have been found in the graves of forgotten braves.

According to Catlin, the best Indian pipes have flat and highly-ornamented stems, often decorated with feathers. The bowl is of many curious and more or less elaborate designs—mostly made of the red pipe-stone, but often also of a native green-stone. Some of the bowls are carved into the shape of birds or the heads of animals.

The modern Red man is said to smoke often out of a bowl of slate, which one would suppose to be hardly a sympathetic vehicle for the soothing weed, and yet surely as agreeable as the iron-cased tubes favoured by some of the darker races of Africa. It is said that the Kaffir can make a tobacco-pipe out of anything—even out of a bit of old gas-tubing.

The Laplanders, too, use thin iron for their pipes, but then they have small choice of material, and Swedish iron is close at hand. Further north, however, and also in Siberia, they are more luxurious, and carve for themselves ivory pipes out of the teeth of the walrus.

Allusion has been made to the iron pipes of negro races, but nowhere is smoking more general, and nowhere is there greater variety of implements, than in the Dark Continent. In the British Museum are many interesting examples. The West Coast tribes use both red clay and wood for the bowls, which are always beautifully carved. One bone pipe in use has no bowl, but is very much like a cigar-holder, into one end of which the tobacco is packed. This kind is

said to be especially used by the women of West Africa.

In the British Museum collection there are remarkable specimens from Lagos, with two and three bowls each to one stem. This multiplicity of bowls is found also in some parts of India, but nowhere else that we are aware of. The advantage of the arrangement is not obvious. The Ashantee pipes are of light red clay, and almost Romanesque in shape. From Dahomey, again, the home of serpent-worship, Sir Richard Burton brought specimens in iron and wood of curious shapes, and with highly decorated stems.

In the Tanganyika country wood is used in very funny shapes. One, used for smoking "bhang," or wild hemp, is for all the world like a thread-bobbin stuck at right angles on to a long hollow bone. The famous King Mtesa of Uganda, however, had a very remarkable ivory pipe, almost Grecian in design, and very delicately decorated. In the British Museum is a monster from the Albert Nyanza, presented by the Khedive. It is eight feet long, and is more like a golf-club than anything else with which we can compare it.

The dwarfs of the Ituri region, recently traversed by Stanley, are ingenious and primitive in their methods. They roll up a banana leaf in the cuneiform style affected by grocers, and this forms the bowl. Then they take the mid-rib of another leaf, hollow it, make a hole near the thick end into which they stick the thin end of the rolled leaf, fill the latter with tobacco, and fire away.

The Bushmen of South Africa use bowls of soap-stone (steatite), fitted by means of a short tube into the horn of some animal. The size and the weight of the pipe in this case depend on the stem, if so one can designate the enormous horn; and the arrangement somehow seems to suggest the man who went about looking for a barrel to fit a bung he had found.

In India are to be seen some of the coarsest and most awkward, as well as some of the most costly and artistic, pipes in the world. Red clay is largely used, and the red ware made from it, out of which the common folk make their cumbersome hand-hookahs, is rough and unattractive. A somewhat better red-ware is made in Scinde, where, and in the North-West Provinces generally, a public hookah is to be found in most villages, of which every passer-by may have a few whiffs on payment of some trifle.

Mention has been made of hand-hookahs, but the true Hookah is a pipe which is self-supporting—that is to say, will stand by itself on the floor. As the central ornament of the guest-chamber, it is a conspicuous object, and therefore much attention is paid to its decoration.

A Narghilé, on the other hand, is an Indian pipe which will not stand alone. The word is said to mean cocoa-nut, the shape of which is frequently affected in Narghilés. Sometimes a carefully selected cocoa-nut shell is used, smoothed, polished, elaborately chased, and mounted in silver. Sometimes a Narghilé may be entirely of beaten and chased silver, with richly decorated wood or ivory stem.

The principle of the Narghilé may be seen in the Gourd-pipes of Central Asia. A long narrow gourd is chosen, and tapered at one end. It is hollowed out, but is not the receptacle for the tobacco, which is placed in a small bowl of wood or clay fitted into the top of the thick end of the gourd. In both the Narghilé and the Hookah, of course, the smoke is drawn through water often delicately scented.

The Turkish and Persian Hookahs, or Hubble-bubbles, are well enough known. In Persia a glass Hookah, called a Shisheh, is sometimes used, and the ladies of Syria are said to prefer their Narghilés of glass.

A Chillum is not, as some people suppose, another form of pipe, but is the name of the tobacco-bowl attached to the Hookah or Narghilé. A Hookah may be of any size—some are as high as three or four feet—with amber or silver-mouthed tubing of many feet in length, requiring no small lung-power to draw. Eastern potentates lavish immense sums over their smoking machines. Diamonds and precious stones are freely used in the ornamentation of both bowl and stem, and the Shah of Persia's favourite pipe is said to be worth several thousands of pounds. In Cashmere they have some very handsome Hookahs of copper, enamelled in rich colours, with elaborately carved Chillums, silk-covered tubes, and silver mouth-pieces.

In Turkey, again, they have two kinds of pipe—the Hookah, or Hubble-bubble, on the Persian and Indian principle, and the Chibouque. This last is an open pipe—the bowl, wide at top, usually of red clay, and shaped so that it will rest on the ground. The stem is very long, sometimes five or six feet, usually of cherry-wood,

and the mouthpiece of thick amber, not to put into the mouth, but against the lips. To light such a pipe as this the smoker needs an attendant.

In contrast to these huge Oriental appliances are the miniature affairs of China and Japan. They have water-pipes in China; but the most common sort have tiny bowls and slender stems. Jade is used for mouthpiece by the rich people; but jade is a costly article, even in China. The Japanese bowls are still smaller, holding just enough tobacco for two or three whiffs at a time.

Another land of big pipes is Germany, and the long painted china-bowls, with metal covers and long flexible stems, are familiar to most of us. For domestic use the stems are very long; but the same build of pipe is used out of doors with a more portable tubing. These pipes are not very good to smoke; but the Germans delight in them, and heavy smokers like to have a bowl which will hold enough tobacco to keep them puffing all day without refilling. In Holland they are more addicted to Clays, and "Dutch Clays" are highly prized by many smokers in this country.

The Briar-root has largely superseded the "Cutty" and the "Churchwarden" in England; yet English and Scotch clay-pipes are still very extensively used, especially in Ireland, where the dhudeen, as a rule, is imported from "perfidious Britain." The names and shapes of Clays are legion, and the illustrated catalogue of the clay-pipe maker is a study in itself. The best pipe-clay is found in Cornwall, and is sent from thence to the pipe makers all over the country.

The largest pipe on record, by the way, is the "Queen's Tobacco Pipe," which used to be kept burning night and day in the London Docks. It held many tons, and was used for the consumption of contraband—and confiscated—tobacco. This, to all good smokers, sinful waste has now been abolished, and contraband tobacco is put up to auction instead of into the Queen's Tobacco Pipe.

The best pipes of all are those made from meerschaum, just as the worst are those made from metal; and for this reason, that the greater the absorbing power of the vehicle to get rid of the nicotine juice, the cleaner and sweeter the smoke. It is said to have been a Thuringian shoemaker who first discovered how well adapted, first for carving, and

then for burning tobacco in, was the clay of his native mountains. Ruhla, in Thuringia, is now the seat of the trade both of real Meerschaums and of sham Meerschaums, which last are made out of the dust left from the genuine manufacture, mixed with common clay or other material.

The following verses on "The Pipes of England" afford an excellent fantasy on our subject. The model will be at once recognised, but the author of the parody is nameless :

The stately pipes of England,
How beautiful they be,
With amber lips and meerschaum bowls !
Such pipes are not for me.
With scented Latakia they burn,
And golden crowns they wear ;
And the smoke steals from the scented urn
Like summer's perfumed air.

The merry pipes of England,
Amid the joke and jest.
With gladsome glasses, toast, and yarn,
Are found then at their best.
The smoker's eye is seen to wink,
As many a tale is told ;
Or lips ope cheerfully to drink
The glorious ale of old.

The cottage pipes of England,
By thousands made of clay,
All snowy in their wooden box,
How beautiful are they !
From ruddy lips they outward poke
As white as wool or lard ;
And the lowly do a cheerful smoke
When times are not too hard.

The best pipes have been named, but what of the best tobacco ? Ah ! does not every smoker know it ? It is that which his own soul loves best. In nothing more than in smoking does the maxim hold good, "Chacun à son goût." One may sing of the rival virtues of pure Virginia, Latakia, Turkish, Cavendish, Schiraz, Golden Cloud, Birdseye, Navy Roll, Rifle Cake, Old Judge, Golden Shag, Sun-dried, and all the multitudinous forms and qualities of the soothing weed. But each man loveth his own brand or his own blend, and is not to be converted from the belief that it surpasseth in excellence all others. And so it does—for him.

Tobacco smoke, as Carlyle truly says, is the one element in which, by our European manners, men can sit silent together without embarrassment, and where no man is bound to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say. Every man is admonished and enjoined, according to the Sage, to stop short at that point ; or, at all events, to hold his peace and take to his pipe again the instant he has spoken his meaning. Tobacco is both a leveller and an elevator.

We cannot better leave the subject than in the jovial company of a Scottish bard, who thus sings in praise of the homely pipe and the fragrant weed :

Let the toper regale in his tankard o' ale,
Or with alcohol moisten his thrapple ;
Only give me, I pray, a good pipe of soft clay,
Nicely tapered and thin in the staple ;
And I shall puff, puff, let who will say enough :
No luxury else I'm in lack o' ;
No malice I hoard 'gainst Queen, Prince, Duke,
Or Lord,
While I pull at my pipe of tobacco.

When I feel the hot strife of the battle of life,
And the prospect is aught but enticin',
Mayhap some real ill, like a protested bill,
Dims the sunshine that tinged the horizon ;
Only let me puff, puff, be they ever so rough,
All the sorrows of life I lose track o' ;
The mists disappear, and the vista is clear,
With a soothing mild pipe of tobacco.

And when joy after pain, like the sun after rain,
Stills the waters, long turbid and troubled,
That life's current may flow with a ruddier glow,
And the sense of enjoyment be doubled,
Oh, let me puff, puff, till I feel quantum suff.,
Such luxury still I'm in lack o' ;
Be joy ever so sweet, it would be incomplete
Without a good pipe of tobacco.

Should my recreant muse, sometimes apt to refuse
The guidance of bit and of bridle,
Still blankly demur, spite of whip and of spur,
Unimpassioned, inconstant, or idle ;
Only let me puff, puff, till the brain cries enough,
Such excitement is all I'm in lack o' ;
And the poetic vein soon to fancy gives rein,
Inspired by a pipe of tobacco.

You probably do not know these verses, but you must admit that they embody a whole code of what Carlyle would call Smoke Philosophy.

THE OLD DOVER ROAD.

FAMOUS as the "Old Kent Road" has become in the lay of the latest music-hall minstrel, there is nothing about it to suggest the ancient highway, oldest and most famous of the great roads of Britain, which for ages formed the main artery of traffic between London and the coast. The growth of London has almost obliterated the track of the great highway. Chaucer's pilgrims, starting from the old "Tabard," could they make their Canterbury pilgrimage once more, would find hardly a vestige of the old landmarks. The fields and hedgerows, the tracts of yellow broom, the windmills on the hill, the stately abbey, the mazes and fish-ponds, the palaces of great ecclesiastics, the mansions of high nobility, all these have disappeared in a wilderness of roofs. Yet there is a good deal still left to recall the intimate connection long existing between the fair land

of Kent, and the Borough from which we start on our pilgrimage. The smell of the hops is there, delightfully fragrant, the white horse of Hengist stencilled on their "pockets," and the legend "Invicta, Kent." Even a country waggon and a carrier's cart, jogging along at the old country pace through all the turmoil of tramcars, 'buses, and railway vans, tell a tale of their own.

But till Greenwich is passed on one side and Blackheath on the other, all is virtually London, and at Shooter's Hill we may look back on the turmoil we have left behind, wrapped up in its hazy cloud of mingled smoke and sunbeams, without feeling too sure that we have finally escaped from its far-reaching net. It was in returning from his Continental tour—made with a good deal of unnecessary baggage—that Childe Harold apostrophised the mother city with such unfilial cynicism, comparing the visionary dome of St. Paul's to a fool's cap, with other unpolite figures of speech. And on Shooter's Hill the returning pilgrim met with an adventure with footpads, which might very well have happened, for the hill was a noted pitch for "gentlemen of the road," and the humbler jackals who robbed on foot. Here we may recall a veritable history from the "Newgate Calendar," of two gallant young highwaymen who rode out one day from London to Blackheath, and over Blackheath to Shooter's Hill, where they placed themselves in ambush and awaited the approach of their quarry. For they had received trustworthy intelligence from ostlers and drawers, time out of mind the robber's aides-de-camp, of a rich booty passing this way in the shape of a collector of customs, or perhaps of excise, with a whole quarter's revenue stowed away under the seat of his one-horse shay. As had been foretold, at the appointed time the chase came grinding up the road almost overweighted with bullion, and the collector, an apple-cheeked old gentleman, touching up the old mare as the carriage approached the sinister-looking clump of trees on the top of the hill. The affair seemed almost too easy to the bold desperadoes as they rode out, masked and armed to the teeth, upon the apple-cheeked old gentleman. The rosy cheek turned a little pale as the collector saw that he was fairly trapped. "Spare my life, gentlemen," he faltered, "and you shall have——" Bang! a shot from the old gentleman's unfaltering hand brought down high-

wayman number one, and the other, losing heart, turned his bridle-rein and fled. The old collector had passed his life in facing smugglers, contrabandists, and desperate characters of all kinds, and the crisis had found him better prepared than his assailants. And before long the bodies of the two highwaymen were swinging on the same gibbet for the encouragement of travellers passing that way.

Although the road keeps to the higher ground and gives pleasant glimpses now and then of the river brightly shining, and dotted with sails, and streaked with the smoke of steamers, yet it is a great deal too bare and straight to win upon the affections. Yet history has something to say to this peculiar directness and straightness which is so tiresome to the ordinary wayfarer. The road is as you see it, because it runs on the track of the great Roman road, the chief line of communication between the garrisons of Roman legionaries and the Continent. Yet it seems probable that this Kentish Watling Street was a well-defined trackway in even earlier times, and that the merchants of Gaul passed to and from the flourishing communities who lined the banks of the Thames long before the Romans were thought of. No doubt, later on Julius Cæsar made use of the track in his raids upon the Britons. And when we come to Crayford we are reminded that here was fought one of the decisive battles of English history, if the Saxon chronicle is to be credited. For was it not at Creganford that our intrusive forefathers gained their first decisive victory over the Britons, so that they ran like fire even as far as the gates of London borough, the Saxon for the first time getting his foot fairly within the door, and keeping it there till he won the whole house at last? And we may solace ourselves for the dulness of Dartford and the general preponderance of murky manufactures by remembering Wat Tyler, who here started that famous insurrection that shook the foundations of the society of the period.

At Dartford the modern road turns towards the river and leaves old Watling Street to pursue its bee-line course over fields and heaths, where it may still be traced. Perhaps this deviation may be due to the attitude taken by the men of Kent at the time of the Conquest, who, if tradition may be believed, having held aloof from Harold and taken no share in

the disastrous battle, intercepted the Conqueror on his triumphal march towards London by throwing themselves into some strong earthworks commanding the great highway at Swanscombe. Hence advancing with oak boughs in their hands they terrified the Conqueror's army, as Macbeth's had been terrified at the approach of Birnam Wood; so that, rather than come to anything worse, the Conqueror, not recognised by that title in Kent, promised to respect their ancient customs and franchises, which was all they wanted.

If the men of Kent were in the business, they are to be thanked for giving us such a pleasant turn of the road to dull Watling Street. For here we have grassy slopes and glimpses of the river and of a pleasant fleet of yachts, and of Ingress Abbey, which may have been a nunnery long ago, but in its actual fabric was built of the stones of old London Bridge, as you can hardly have failed to learn, if ever you have taken the long sea voyage to Gravesend or Sheerness. And it is quite a surprise to come upon the white cliffs and terraced walks of Rosherville, while the road passes at the foot of Windmill Hill, from which Gravesend is seen at its best, with all "the embarked traders on the flood," and Tilbury over the way in its quiet seclusion, and new white forts peering out from unexpected corners. And some miles along the way lies Gad's Hill, among its associations with the Shakespearean age, and Falstaff's genial braggadocio, and of Dickens, who has made the whole district memorable, and peopled the very highway with the creations of his genius.

But now as we approach Strood, the fume and incense of kilns, and breweries, and factories come upon us, and it is a busy world we see as we top the hill, and look down on the wide Medway, the mingled smoke and steam throwing a haze over the wonderful scene presented by the noble old Norman keep that still seems to guard the bridge, and the Cathedral all weathered and brown, and the tangle round about of quaint roofs and dwellings, of closes, courts, and fair old gardens. The great railway girders and the unpromising utility of the modern Rochester Bridge are in some way a foil and contrast to the hoar antiquity on the other side. We may regret the old bridge of stone with its twenty-one arches, or the wooden bridge which existed before that,

and which in one form or shape must have existed since the days of Roman dominion, as it is impossible to believe that such an all-important line of communication should have been left to the mercy of deep fords and crossings in a strong tidal river. The old bridge was thickly peopled with popular traditions: the whole country-side was concerned in it, different parishes took each an arch, and even Church lands relieved from most other imposts were obliged to contribute to the repair of the bridge.

Bridge and Castle have seen some stern services together. Hardly was the Norman keep in a defensible state—it seems never to have been completely finished—when Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, took refuge in it, and was besieged by Rufus with all the force of the kingdom. King John besieged the Castle, which was held successfully for the Barons, and later Simon de Montfort burnt the bridge which he could not storm, and failed also to storm the Castle, although it was surrendered to him after the Mise of Lewes. Disorganised by all these assaults, the old bridge broke down altogether in a time of severe frost, and was swept away in the ice floods. It was next repaired and replaced by Edward the Third when he was on the march to conquer France. And then we hear of the bridge being purposely broken down on the alarm of a French invasion.

After all it was with the spoils of France that a "faire stone bridge" was built at last, in 1387, at the cost of two brave knights and commanders who had gained much booty in the French wars. This new stone bridge lasted to 1850, by which time it had come to be called the old bridge. One would have liked to have seen the four-horse coaches filing over that many-arched bridge, their lamps gleaming in the waters below, and the pale crescent of the moon resting on the dark Castle keep. But the lot of the Castle is, perhaps, happier than it has ever been before, for its courts are laid out in lawns and flower-beds, and the whole is under the care of the Corporation, who give visitors the run of the venerable ruined keep at threepence a head. And the keep, after all, not so much ruined but that you can reach the battlements by a corkscrew stair, and admire all the prospect below: the steam and stew of Strood, the soft windings of the river as it comes wimpling down from the centre of the fair land of

Kent. In the Medway, as it flows mid-way through Kent, you have an explanation of that puzzling shibboleth which demands the difference between a man of Kent and a Kentish man—the former being one who lives or was born on the east side of the Medway, while the other is not quite “*pur sang*,” and can only be described as “*Kentish*.”

A quaint old high street, too, is that of Rochester, which is just our Watling Street or Dover Road lined with houses. There is the “*Bull*” on the right, just after passing the bridge, a famous coaching house, and still retaining its most characteristic features, with a most pleasant colonnaded portico, that matches very well with the Guildhall on the other side, with its area of chequered Purbeck marble, upon which Hogarth and his friends played “*Scotch hop*” when they visited Rochester on their famous tour. The pavement looks equally inviting now, but who would have courage to begin?

From the Castle battlements we see the white dusty road that we must follow, scored on the flank of the hill; and now we look down on the Castle and Cathedral, on the red roofs of Rochester, and the busy swarm of Chatham, with the masts and funnels of the great war-ships showing among the great sheds and storehouses of the Dockyard. And beyond the lines and the old-fashioned red-brick forts, and holding a strong position on the crest of the down, stands a huge square tower that looks like some enormous castle keep. “It is Jezreel’s tower,” says a passer-by, and like the Tower of Babel, it represents an aspiration “*ad astra*,” which the resources of its builders were insufficient to carry out. But the tower, although roofless and windowless, is still the dwelling-place and temple of many of the faithful Jezreelites, quiet, industrious people who retain a touching faith in the promises and prophecies of their first founder. And as a feature in the landscape, seen against the sky in its gaunt and bare isolation, the tower is not without a certain mystic impressiveness.

Impressive, too, is the inflexible directness of the great highway that stretches before us, over hill and dale, with farms and cottages scattered here and there, among pastures, fruit-gardens, and plantations. Rainham is reached, and then Sittingbourne, a quiet little town which was once busy enough with the traffic of the great highway, and which boasted many excellent

inns, at one of which—the “*Red Lion*”—according to tradition, Henry the Fifth was entertained with his retinue on his return from France after his victory at Agincourt. His host was one Mr. Norwood, probably the sheriff of the county, and the cost of the whole feast was but nine shillings and ninepence, wine costing only twopence a quart and everything else being in proportion.

Beyond Sittingbourne we get glimpses of the low-lying country that borders the sea-channel of the Swale, which cuts off the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland: a district long famed for fertility and for its productive fruit-gardens, but associated with prejudices on the score of non-salubrity. Here was “*wealth without health*,” and people were cheerfully assured that if they “*did not wish to live long*” they should go to “*Mursam, Teynham, or Tong*,” those being the chief settlements in this sub-tropical region. A few miles further and we are at Faversham, the metropolis of this corner of Kent. There is hardly a vestige left of the famous old Abbey where slept King Stephen and his worthy spouse under their canopied tombs, and many great nobles and gallant knights. But some part of the gateway still remains, with relics of the steward’s house adjoining, noted as the scene of the woeful murder of worshipful Master Arden, at the hands of his wife’s lover Mosbie and a certain hired bravo, one Black Will, a discharged soldier from the “*siege of Bullen*,” who had followed Arden from Southwark even as far as here along the very route we have traversed, without finding an opportunity of striking the fatal blow.

In its present state Faversham is as pleasant a little country town as could be desired, set in a beautiful country almost cloying in its richness; and in Faversham Creek waiting for the tide lies a little fleet of those handsome red-sailed barges which sail hence piled high with hay for the London market, and which give such a grateful relief to the dingy tones of the river traffic. And in the coaching days of old a passage by tilt boat from London Bridge to Faversham, there to join the great Dover Road, was one of the routes available for Continental traffic.

Once past Faversham the attraction of Canterbury begins to be felt, as comets may feel the attraction of the sun before they incontinently tumble into the flare of it. Everything is of to-day, and yet it might be centuries ago. You may ride with

Chaucer if you will, just so calm and sweet was the pleasant country when his pilgrims rode that way. Just here, perhaps, it was that the Sompnour began his tale—somewhere by Boughton under Blene, and here is Bleau Wood itself, which still retains a savour of its ancient wildness. At Harbledon there are some old almshouses which were in existence when the Black Prince rode this way, as he often did, and close by is the Prince's Well, with water cool and clear, and it is said that while on his death-bed in Westminster tormented with fever and thirst, his thoughts turned to the cool and shady spring, and that a supply of the water was brought all that distance that he might taste it once more. And these old bedesmen of Harbledon were a familiar nuisance in the pilgrim track. They possessed an old shoe which had once belonged to Saint Thomas, and other small relics, which were shown of necessity to the pilgrim and compelled a donation on his part. Erasmus describes the scene as he makes the pilgrimage with Dean Colet, both being infected with the modern cynical spirit, and poking veiled ridicule at the whole affair.

For us Canterbury is only one of the incidents of the road. We may visit the tomb of the Black Prince in the Cathedral, and the humble-looking little church of Saint Martin, the earliest Christian church in England, and partly built of Roman masonry; but Saint Martin's is on the left-hand road which leaves the city, pointing towards Sandwich, and is the actual representative of the Roman road which led to Rutupie, the great port of Roman Britain, a few miles northward of the more modern Sandwich. The latter was itself a great mediæval port, crowded with the masts of ships that had brought loads of pilgrims for Canterbury, who might be seen trudging in crowds towards the towers of the sacred city.

The road which leads to the right and towards Dover is one of the pleasantest and brightest possible, through a lovely fertile country, without commanding features, but with a charming succession of hill and dale of richness indescribable. Nor is the sound of the coachman's horn altogether unknown, as a four-horse coach runs during the summer between Folkestone and Canterbury along the Dover Road.

When you come to that admirable gap in the range of huge white cliffs and bare-backed downs, with the blue sea coming sparkling in, and the white sails,

everything seems to dance in the full enjoyment of sun and breeze. But you can't help wondering at the dispensation that has made of this strip of beach and this mere gap in the great cliffs such an important port and rendezvous of traffic. Of how many great harbours of much greater natural advantages has old Dover seen the rise and fall, while she who has always been a source of some anxiety to her friends, and required a good deal of support in the way of piers and breakwaters, dredgers, groins, and so on, is still alive and merry! The Roman pharos on the Castle Hill bears witness that Roman galleys sailed for the port from the opposite shores of Gaul, while to-day two black streaks over the blue waters indicate that the Ostend and Boulogne boats are making for the same pleasant haven. But our coach must pull up in Snargate Street; we have nothing to do with the Continental traffic, or with the express trains that come thundering past, laden with gay people who are going to take their holidays abroad; with Ambassadors, perhaps, and attachés; with messengers bearing despatches; with brides and bridegrooms on honeymoon tours; with officers rushing to catch the Indian mail; with ladies'-maids with handboxes and port-manteaux. All these disappear with a roar and a rattle, and leave not a wrack behind.

But we are thinking of the quiet, placid Dover of old times when the engineers were still burrowing under Shakespeare's Cliff, and the bricklayers were at work on that tall Folkestone Viaduct. How quiet was the old Castle where the sentries paced up and down in their red swallow-tails and worsted epaulettes, a kind of being apart whom one regarded with a kind of awe as devoted for life to what seemed a cruel captivity! And there was one particular point where you were startled by the sudden ringing of a bell, and there was a money-box with the inscription, "Please remember the poor debtors," and the bell was connected by a string with a strong grated window, behind the bars of which were to be seen human figures, and when something was put into the box, hands and a white kerchief waved a graceful acknowledgement. Then there were coaches still on the road, and yellow "vans" from all the country towns which crossed and exchanged their traffic, and kept up a gentle circulation of life in the quiet, cheerful, chaty country-side.

AT ST. SEBASTIAN.

FAR, and near, and wide they sleep
 Who die for England's sake;
 Where never love can its vigil keep,
 Where never the hearts that ache
 Can come to tend the happy flowers
 That spring, as to mock our tears,
 In the bloom that returns with summer hours,
 Through all the varying years.

Very far and wide they sleep
 Who die for England's sake;
 Yet never, I think, could the charnel gloom
 So fair an aspect take,
 As where the southern sunshine lights
 The long Biscayan waves,
 And the fort on St. Sebastian's heights
 Stands o'er the English graves.

O'er their graves who died in the fierce assault,
 Those guarded walls to win;
 Do the restless rollers remember yet
 How their eternal din
 Was lost in the cheer and battle-cry,
 Borne on the startled blast,
 As St. George's banner, borne on high,
 Crowned the great fort at last?

Very quietly do they lie,
 Our heroes, laid asleep,
 Where round St. Clara's fairy isle
 The breakers surge and sweep;
 Where the gorse and the broom flash living gold
 To the blaze of the noonday sun,
 And high above stands the mighty hold,
 By English valour won.

The old familiar names stand out
 To the wistful English eyes;
 The old familiar tales of fame
 Wake 'neath the stranger skies;
 The foreign tones and accents sound
 Like voices in a dream,
 So home-like do the names around
 To the English wanderers seem.

Very quietly they lie,
 Till the last parade shall come,
 And the long roll of England's dead
 Hear Heaven's own muster drum.
 Ah, stately height 'neath the Spanish sky,
 Take the trust our fathers gave,
 When, after their dear-bought victory,
 They left 'neath your turf the brave.

A LONG VACATION ROMANCE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

IN the Long Vacation Oxford falls asleep, and for the space of about three months has few waking moments. The work of repair and restoration is, it is true, taken up with more or less of energy, but the dull, monotonous tap, tap of hammer and chisel only seems to soothe the ancient city to a deeper slumber. The scout, freed from the toils—as well as from the tips—of term, tries to get up a little merriment on his own account, and even goes so far as to indulge in bumping races and cricket matches, but only succeeds in rousing mournful echoes, that sigh as if unwilling to be disturbed in the absence of their lawful masters.

One hot summer, years ago, the city enjoyed an unusually profound slumber. Even through the excitement of Commemoration its drowsiness had been plainly visible, and Town hardly paid Gown the compliment of watching its departing tail flutter out of sight, ere it sank into a blissful state of utter repose. The heat was almost unbearable, and a dull sense of oppression in the air made exercise an effort. There was no bright sunshine, no smiling blue sky, no whispering breeze; a thick haze clouded the sun, and for many days the dead calm remained unbroken.

Yet, in the midst of the slumbering city, one young person was wide awake and full of wondering delight. Regardless of the unpleasant weather, she wandered all day long through deserted quadrangles, in quiet gardens, and along the towing-path beside the tranquil river; and her mood was that of one who is gazing at a beautiful, incomprehensible picture, and fears to be interrupted by some jarring word before the meaning fully reveals itself.

A few days ago, when she was still at home in the north-country vicarage, she had exclaimed a little petulantly:

"Oh, father! I wish I need not spend three dull weeks in Oxford with Aunt Barham. I would much rather go on to Staines at once. Miss Lilley is always so lively and pleasant."

But here she was, pacing Magdalen Cloisters and sighing to herself:

"Only a fortnight longer, and then I must leave this dear place and go to Staines! How shall I endure those coarse, vulgar Lilleys and their tiresome, crowded evening parties, after the beauty and peace that is all around one here!"

From which rapid change of opinion it will be rightly surmised that Miss Edith Barham was of an impressionable nature. She had no young friends, and no very near relations excepting her father, who was the Vicar of a straggling parish among the Yorkshire moorlands, and who took little or no interest in anything that concerned his daughter, being wholly occupied with parochial matters. Her education had been fitful and unsystematic, so that at nineteen her character was still unformed, and her mind dangerously pliable. Time alone could show what manner of woman she was to become.

She generally spent these hot July afternoons in the shady cloisters, until the

ashadows began to lengthen, and the air to grow cooler, when she betook herself to the river, and had one blissful half-hour's boating before tea-time came round. For five days she had submitted to the degradation of taking a boatman with her, but on the sixth, having learned to row a little—a very little—she concluded that such a precaution was no longer necessary, and after making many vehement protestations that she could swim, and pretending to listen to numberless warnings and instructions delivered by the man from whom she hired her boat, Edith set out on her solitary voyage.

She had promised to turn into the safer waters of the Cherwell, but discovered, a little to her dismay, that she was quite unable to perform such a feat, and must be content to drift down the Isis.

"However, it won't matter," she said comfortably, "there isn't a bit of danger."

But her troubles were yet to come.

Nearing Ifley, she found herself rapidly drifting in among a number of small boats, occupied by some not altogether pleasing varieties of the local athlete, who were engaged in practising for certain city boat-races, destined to take place on Bank Holiday.

"Why do they make such a noise?" she wondered, and for two or three minutes did not realise that the tumult of shouts and yells which arose had any reference to herself. When this fact dawned upon her she felt somewhat nervous, and made matters worse by attempting to get out of the way, nearly upsetting two or three boats during the process. How she managed to turn round was ever afterwards a mystery to her, but when that great exploit was accomplished, her difficulties were by no means at an end. Try as she would, she could not make any headway against the stream, though it was neither swift nor strong, for her limited knowledge of the art of managing a boat was speedily frightened away by the angry shouts and contemptuous laughter which greeted her on all sides. Tears of vexation filled her eyes; she was seized with a wild desire to jump into the river, and swim to the bank, but, fortunately, had not sufficient courage for such a rash proceeding. Help was at hand, however, for at the same moment Edith and her tormentors heard a sudden splash of oars, followed by an indignant exclamation, as another boat, coming up from Ifley, appeared on the scene. Its solitary occupant

was a broad-shouldered, dark-haired young man, who, after a searching glance at two or three of the young men, remarked significantly, and at the same time with perfect quietness:

"I shall remember you, Smith and Briggs!"

The men looked a little shamefaced, and offered no reply, while the stranger turned to Edith, and, raising his hat, proposed taking her boat in tow, as he was going up to Folly Bridge.

"It would be rather dangerous for you to attempt it alone, as perhaps you are—well a little out of practice with your sculling, and most likely haven't read the rules of the river very carefully."

"Rules of the river!" echoed Edith; "why, I didn't even know there were any!"

"Ah! then you had much better allow me to take you up," he said, and she gratefully accepted his help. Not another word was spoken as the two boats slowly floated homewards; Edith and her unknown rescuer landed in silence, and were about to part, when the former caught sight of a stout, elderly lady, who stood at some little distance away, with her back towards them. She was conversing earnestly with the man whose boat Edith had hired, and did not turn until she heard that young lady's exclamation of "Aunt Barham!" Then she spun round with surprising rapidity and cried:

"Edith, my dearest child! I am very glad to see you back again, as this worthy man was actually trying to persuade me that you are not capable of managing a boat. 'Indeed,' said I, 'you are entirely mistaken; my niece is able to do anything she chooses.' And you see," she added, turning to the boatman, "that I was quite right, for here she is, all safe and sound. In fact, I have no doubt she can row as well as many an experienced hand, such as yourself!"

The recipient of this interesting information only grinned, having seen Edith's ignominious return in the wake of the other boat; but the girl was pleased to see that the stranger did not even smile, as he turned to bid her "good afternoon" for the second time. However, another interruption occurred at this point; Aunt Barham happened to catch sight of the one person in their little group whom she had hitherto overlooked, and with a pleasant smile upon her fat, rosy face, said heartily:

"Good afternoon, Mr. Thurland; I am glad to see you! Edith, my dear, this is Mr. Thurland; in a city overflowing with young people, he is the only one who condescends to call upon an old woman like myself."

The young man was far from indisposed to becoming acquainted with pretty Miss Barham; he was still more pleased when he saw the look of admiration which her aunt's words called forth; and his feeling was one of positive joy, on hearing the elder lady invite him to accompany them home to tea. Needless to say, he accepted; and his doing so caused Edith some satisfaction, as she was very willing to know more of her gallant deliverer.

His manner was so bright and unaffected, and his conversation so lively and interesting, that, by the time tea was over, Edith had quite decided that he was a great acquisition, and hoped she should see more of him during her stay in Oxford. After tea, the young people strolled about the old-fashioned garden together, as Mr. Thurland was seized with a sudden and irresistible desire to inspect Aunt Barham's hollyhocks. Now that worthy old lady never walked in her garden after the abnormally early hour at which she supposed that the wily and treacherous dewdrop might be found lurking among the grasses, and perhaps the artful young man knew it! At any rate, he presently found himself treading the narrow garden-paths in company with Edith, while Mrs. Barham enjoyed forty winks in her easy-chair.

After doing his duty by the hollyhocks, and making a few brilliant remarks upon the state of the weather, Mr. Thurland ventured to ask:

"What do you think of Oxford, Miss Barham?"

"Oh! I can't tell you, Mr. Thurland! The beauty of it almost makes me afraid at times, it is such a wonderful thing. On these hot, still afternoons, when the city is so calm and peaceful, I sometimes fancy that if I had a great trouble, I would come here to some quiet corner, where the nearness of these old walls, that have lived through so much, would comfort me. But that is only a silly, sentimental idea. Please laugh at it, as it deserves!"

He did not laugh, however, but said gently, "I understand your feeling perfectly," and then there was a long silence. Presently Edith spoke again.

"I wish one could express one's feelings, somehow," she said; "at times I feel quite

wild because I cannot put my thoughts about beautiful places and things into words, and no one else seems able to do it for me. I suppose it is the kind of sensation that deaf and dumb people must experience."

"Are you fond of poetry?" her companion asked.

"I never read any," she replied, "because I am afraid it might make me unpractical. Father says it would."

Mr. Thurland smiled. He really could not help it. The idea that this childish creature, with her soft, almost wistful grey eyes, and her sweet, undecided mouth, could under any circumstances be described as "practical," amused him not a little. However, he replied with praiseworthy gravity:

"I think it would give you great satisfaction to read good poetry, and I don't think it would do you any harm. With all deference to your opinion, Miss Barham, it seems to me that there are greater virtues than the somewhat uninteresting one of practicality."

"Perhaps so," said Edith, "but I can't judge fairly, because all the people I know are very sensible and practical. My father, and Aunt Barham—she is father's aunt, really—Miss Lilley, and her nephew, are all very matter-of-fact, and never do anything that is silly or useless."

"I think I have met Miss Lilley, once or twice, when I have been calling here," said Mr. Thurland; "I believe her nephew is a very wealthy banker, is he not?"

Why should the young gentleman look so closely at his companion as he put this question, and why should Edith blush and stammer as she answered briefly?

"Ye—yes, he is." A moment later she added: "Miss Lilley is Aunt Barham's greatest friend, and in May they all spent three weeks together at Ilkley. They often came over to see us, and I spent a few days with them. Miss Lilley wished to take me back with her to Staines, but it wasn't convenient for me to leave home just then, so I am going there when I leave Oxford, a fortnight to-morrow," and Edith sighed deeply as if the prospect did not seem pleasant.

After another long silence, followed by a few commonplace remarks, Mr. Thurland awoke to the consciousness that he ought to be taking his departure, and reluctantly arose to go. Mrs. Barham aroused herself sufficiently to say, "Good evening, Mr. Thurland; come and see us again, as soon as

you can; it's so dull for the child with no one but a sleepy old woman to talk to!" and then she sank once more into a refreshing slumber, while Edith went back to the dim, dewy garden, and thought a great deal about her new acquaintance.

Mr. Thurland, meantime, returned to his lonely rooms, and having surrounded himself with books and papers, sat down to work. But the attempt was not successful. His thoughts wandered idly, and though he read page after page, he did not take in the meaning of a single sentence. This happened only too often, for, notwithstanding the fact that he was a young man of unusual abilities, he had failed to acquire the habit of systematic study, and, except when under the influence of a very strong motive, did not work to much purpose. His present occupation was that of a "coach," but he had remained at Oxford during the Long, with a view to reading for an examination, of which he hoped the result would be his appointment to a more lucrative post. There was not a doubt of his coming out head of the list if he would only exert himself, but there lay the difficulty. He might have been different if there had been any one to take an interest in him, but his father had been dead many years, and his mother and sisters lived on the Continent, rather from poverty than from choice. Consequently, though full of good impulses, a dreamer of great dreams, and something of a poet, Darcy Thurland, at four-and-twenty, was not the man he might have been.

During the first weeks of this vacation he had done no work worth the name, "owing to the heat," he said; but a day or two after he made the acquaintance of Edith Barham there came a change. Though the weather was as hot and sultry as before, it suddenly ceased to be any obstacle in the way of hard work, and Darcy was seized with a fever of industry which promised to carry him through the examination with glory and triumph. For he told himself that he had met his fate, that he was actually "in love"—a state as interesting and delightful as it had been unexpected; and what was better still, that whereas he had hitherto wasted his time, he would henceforward work with all his might, and obtain the now ardently wished-for appointment, that he might be justified in trying to win the girl he loved.

On the day following their introduction, Edith and Darcy chanced to meet in the

Broad Walk, and as neither had come out with any more serious intention than that of taking a constitutional in the shade of the old elms, what wonder was it that Darcy should turn and walk by Edith's side, and that she should gladly assent to his proposal of strolling round the meadow together? Once more the conversation turned on the subject of poetry, and Edith asked her companion what he should advise her to read.

"Wordsworth and Keats are my own favourite poets," he said, "and I think you would enjoy reading their works. If you will allow me, I will lend you the poems of either, or both."

"Oh, thank you so much," cried Edith, "you are very good; but you will miss the books, I am afraid, for I know from your way of speaking of them, that they are not only books, but friends."

"Friends they certainly are," he replied, smiling; "but I shall not part with them in lending them to you, because a great number of the poems will remain in my memory."

"Please recite some of them now," begged Edith very earnestly. "I should like to hear them!"

"I cannot do them justice," said Darcy modestly; "but if you really wish it, I will try;" and beginning with Wordsworth's sonnet on Oxford, he proceeded to introduce to Edith his favourite poets with such complete success that she was quite sure that, however much she might read, she should never like any poems so well as those of Wordsworth and Keats! Darcy owned to himself afterwards that it was those beautiful, changeful grey eyes, glowing with fire and excitement, or shining with tenderness, as the girl listened, that drew him across the borderland which lies between admiration and love.

An hour later they parted at Mrs. Barham's gate, each cheered by an agreeable conviction that another pleasant meeting would take place before very long.

The next day Darcy worked steadily, and it was not until evening that he set out for Mrs. Barham's pretty little house in Banbury Road, armed with the promised volumes of poems. He was so warmly received by both aunt and niece, as to venture upon propounding to them a pleasant idea of his own—in other words, to beg for the honour of taking the ladies on the river occasionally.

"You are very kind, Mr. Thurland," said Mrs. Barham, looking gratified, "and

though I don't care for the river, Edith, I am sure, will be very pleased to go with you. Of course, though she will not own it, she can row beautifully"—Mrs. Barham would have been deeply offended if you had named in her hearing the thing that Edith could not do—"but it is so dull for her to go alone, poor child."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Thurland," said Edith, when they went to inspect the hollyhocks once more; "it is really good of you to offer to take me on the river, for I have not dared to venture alone again, and I hated the thought of that man and how he would laugh, if I had to give in to taking a boatman after all. But I shouldn't like you to sacrifice your valuable time——"

"Sacrifice!" echoed Darcy, with fine scorn. Then the dark eyes looked into the grey ones for a moment, and that was answer enough.

The remainder of Edith's stay in Oxford seemed to glide away like a happy, short-lived dream, both to her and to Darcy. All through the long mornings Darcy worked with a new energy, inspired by the thought of what he hoped his work would win for him; and meanwhile Edith would be dreaming over Wordsworth and Keats in some shady garden, reading again and again the poems which he had repeated to her. Perhaps these quiet hours, when the occupation of each was so mingled with thoughts of the other, did more to draw them together than any number of actual meetings could have done. At any rate, it was always with renewed gladness that they met to spend the hot, still afternoons on the river, drifting idly with the stream, or gently floating on the peaceful, shaded Cherwell.

And so Edith's happy visit came to an end, and the last evening came, all too soon.

Aunt Barham was the most unsuspecting of old ladies, and it never once occurred to her that the two young people had any other feeling for one another than that of simple friendship, for she had fully made up her mind that her grand-niece should marry the wealthy Mr. Lilley, and therefore did not hesitate to invite Mr. Thurland to tea on this last evening of Edith's stay in Oxford.

How willingly he sacrificed his dinner to Mrs. Barham's primitive hours there is no need to say, and it is equally unnecessary to relate how carefully Edith arrayed herself in her prettiest dress, and

spent upwards of an hour in doing her hair in the most becoming way.

When tea was over, Darcy considered in his own mind how he could best contrive to secure a tête-à-tête with Miss Barham, for the hollyhocks had succumbed to the stifling heat of the past few days, and, besides, the garden was small and anything but secluded. However, finding that she had never been in the gardens of Trinity College, he proceeded to give such a glowing description of the beautiful Lime Walk, that Edith at once wished to see it, and what could he do but offer to accompany her?

Up and down the avenue they paced in the sunset light. Overhead was the cool green roof of interlacing branches, and around them the leaves stirred and rustled in the faint breeze which had arisen at last. Beyond stretched the velvet lawn—such a lawn as cannot be found out of Oxford—and above all was the glowing sky, changing and deepening from palest gold to richest rose-colour.

For a long time Edith and Darcy were silent, awed by that wonderful beauty of Nature which gives to her children thoughts that they cannot share with others, because they are unspeakable. At last Edith broke the silence.

"What a beautiful world this is!" she exclaimed impulsively. "I cannot realise that it is the commonplace world of every day."

"Nor I," said Darcy, with a sigh. "We shall both be in a very different world to-morrow."

"Oh, do not speak of it!" she cried. "I cannot bear to think of leaving Oxford. But you will be here; you can come to this place to-morrow and find it just the same."

"Miss Barham," he exclaimed reproachfully, "do you think anything will be the same to me when you have gone?"

Edith blushed nervously, and for a moment did not know what to answer. But she smiled very happily, as she said at length:

"I am coming here again for two or three days, when I leave Miss Lilley's. Auntie was so anxious for me to spend a little more time with her, that I promised to make her another visit—a very short one—on my way home, at the end of October."

Darcy was delighted to hear this; it had been no small hardship for him to decide upon letting Edith go, without his

putting to her the great question which he longed to ask, yet dared not in his present position.

"In three months, then, you will be here again," he said, as they paced the Lime Walk for the last time; "by that time my examination will be over, and I hope to have gained the appointment I wish for. I mean to win it and I will win it," he added earnestly; "and then—" Darcy paused, but his look told the rest, and he could not fail to read his answer in Edith's loving eyes.

Two hours later they stood by the drawing-room window, while Mrs. Barham dozed in her easy-chair. Edith drew aside the curtain, and they looked out. Before them was all the wonder and the mystery of a summer night: the trees were black against the greenish-blue sky; the crescent moon, slender as a thread of silver, no longer looked wan and ghostly, as when they saw it through the flush of sunset, for while the skies darkened it shone ever clearer and stronger.

"It is like a true love," said Darcy softly; "the darker its surroundings, the brighter it becomes." Presently he said regretfully: "I must go now, and we shall not meet again for three months. Miss Barham, you will not forget me?"

And she answered simply:

"I couldn't forget you, Mr. Thurland!"

The day after Edith's departure, Darcy called on Mrs. Barham, and enquired—quite casually, of course—if she had heard from her niece.

"Oh, yes," she replied readily, "I had a letter from her this morning, the dear, thoughtful child that she is! So good of her to write at once to her lonely old auntie, wasn't it, Mr. Thurland?"

Darcy having assented with rather more fervour than the occasion required, Mrs. Barham took the letter from her pocket, and proceeded to acquaint him with its contents:

"She arrived at Staines in time for lunch, and had a pleasant drive to Windsor with dearest Lavinia, afterwards. She wishes to be kindly remembered to you, Mr. Thurland. The weather is cooler. She would write more, but Mr. Lilley is waiting to take her through the conservatories."

Here the old lady beamed over her spectacles at Darcy, and exclaimed rapturously:

"So kind and considerate of dear

Octavius, thus cheerfully devoting a portion of his valuable time to making Edith's visit pleasanter! Though, to be sure, he would do anything for her, and I am looking forward almost daily to hearing of their engagement. Such a charming arrangement it would be!"

"Charming indeed!" assented Darcy politely, feeling with an inward sense of triumph, that he could well afford to do so.

"She adds a touching little P.S.," continued Mrs. Barham, "which I will read to you.

"Dearest Auntie," she affectionately writes, 'I cannot close without again thanking you most warmly for my happy, happy visit. After my delightful three weeks with you, Staines has few attractions for me'—excepting Octavius, I suppose she means, the dear!—'and, if I could, I would return to you to-morrow. I am quite sure that I shall never be so happy anywhere as I have been at Oxford!' Really gratifying, isn't it?" said Mrs. Barham complacently. "I did not know that I had done anything to make the child's visit so delightful as she seems to have found it."

For at least half an hour longer the two talked of Edith, and the unsuspecting Mrs. Barham found nothing extraordinary in the fact that their subject of conversation seemed just as interesting to her companion as to herself. When Darcy at length took his leave, it was with a renewed determination to work and to win.

It was the thirtieth of October. The three months of Edith's absence had slipped rapidly away, and Darcy Thurland sat by his window, idly looking down into the street, and trying to realise that Miss Barham would be in Oxford again on the morrow. When the realisation was accomplished, it did not afford him such intense satisfaction as might have been expected, for he sighed wearily, and exclaimed with some impatience: "What an idiot I have been!" And he was right, on the whole.

For three weeks after Edith's departure he had worked well, cheered by friendly messages sent to him through Mrs. Barham, but after a time these messages ceased, and then, by degrees, Darcy's visits to the old lady became much less frequent, and somehow he did not work quite so hard as before.

At this critical point he received a pressing invitation from an artist friend, a

Bohemian of Bohemians, who lived in London. After much hesitation he decided to accept it, quieting his conscience by making an inward vow that he would read at least six hours a day during the fortnight he should spend in town, and, with this object in view, taking with him about a third part of his library.

But though the fortnight lengthened itself out into six weeks, he did no reading to speak of after the first day or two, and it was with much regret that he returned to Oxford for the important examination. The merry, hand-to-mouth existence of his friend looked very pleasant to Darcy, and one day he was surprised and a little alarmed to find himself thinking:

"If it were not for Edith Barham, I would go to London, earn money by writing, and lead just such a life as he does."

Once admitted, the thought returned again and again, until the sweet memory of those happy days in July was turned to bitterness. It was little wonder that he failed in his examination, and was still, on the eve of Edith's return, as poor as when she went away.

"Do I love her?" he asked himself. "I loved her when she was here, and yet the hope of winning her was not strong enough to keep me to my work. Somehow she doesn't seem to be the kind of girl who can inspire an affection capable of influencing one greatly in her absence; and I—well, I am weak, too. I wonder what will come of it all. I am not likely to be in a position to marry for years to come. To be sure, there is no engagement, nor even what could be called an understanding; but things have gone so far that I cannot honourably back out of it. Perhaps she has completely forgotten me by this time; at any rate, she soon ceased to send messages to me. But if she seems disposed to begin where we left off, she shall find no change in me; and if she chooses to forget the past, I will forget it, too."

On the following morning Edith found herself at the end of another happy visit, and for the second time shed tears on leaving a place which had become dear to her. How it came about she did not quite know, but by the end of her first week at Staines, all her half-tender, half-melancholy thoughts of Oxford began to disappear, and she suddenly awoke to the fact that she was enjoying herself thoroughly. How could she be all-engrossed

by the distant, shadowy Darcy Thurland, when the tangible, substantial Octavius Lilley was at her elbow all day long?

It was not to be expected of Edith Barham, at all events. Gay, frivolous, and money-loving, the Lilleys speedily undid all the good that had been wrought in Edith's nature by the influence of her surroundings, the good books she had read, and that dawning love which had made the days so bright. Now she regarded her promised two days at Oxford as a tiresome delay; Wordsworth and Keats had been exchanged for a series of "Shilling Shockers," and she had begun to think of settling down to wealth, ease, and—Octavius.

As she left Staines behind, however, her thoughts by degrees wandered to Oxford. She could not help recalling some of the incidents of her stay there. They came back to her in a dim, confused way, like an old dream which other dreams have dispelled, and she could not remember exactly what she had said and done. But the thought of Darcy brought a faint blush to her cheek, and she began to wonder what had become of him; if he had obtained the desired appointment; and, above all, what would happen when they met again. What would he say, and what must she do? There was something very charming about him, she owned, and she really had liked him; but then there was Octavius, and—well, it was very puzzling, and she didn't know how she should behave. Perhaps she might like him as well as ever when she saw him again. After considering the matter for some time she came to the conclusion that it would be best to take the safe course of regulating her conduct by Darcy's, and then dismissed the matter from her mind.

Darcy, in a sentimental moment, had likened the moon to love, because, as he said, "the darker its surroundings, the brighter it becomes." He had entirely forgotten another equally strong point of resemblance—the aptness of each to grow dim and pale in the glare of sunny skies.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Edith sallied forth to revisit one or two of her favourite haunts, not without some curiosity as to what her own feelings would be, on seeing the familiar places again. But the sentiments she had more than half hoped to arouse remained dormant; there was nothing in the scenes before her to call them forth. Quiet

streets and peaceful by-ways were a dream of the past; groves and gardens were damp and dreary; the river looked uninvitingly cold, and mists lay thick upon the meadows. In the withered leaves that lay underfoot, or fluttered from the wet branches, there was nothing to recall the glorious greenery of summer, and on Edith's changeful, impressible spirit there fell a sense of chill and disappointment.

As she was walking along High Street on her way back, the wind suddenly rose, and immediately afterwards there came a heavy shower of blinding rain. Edith ran into the nearest shop for shelter, and in doing so, narrowly escaped a collision with a gentleman who stood just inside the doorway, examining some books. She turned quickly to apologise, but the words died on her lips, for before her stood Darcy Thurland!

Having met so suddenly that neither had time for preparation or disguise of any kind, they looked at one another for a moment in startled silence, and in that moment much was revealed. Each saw that the other had changed for the worse, and that all was over between them. Darcy at length spoke, very coldly, very politely:

"Good afternoon, Miss Barham; this is an unexpected pleasure. When did you arrive?"

"Only this morning," she replied, with equal coldness, but less composure.

"And did you enjoy your visit to—to—Staines was it, or Stamford?"

This implied uncertainty of memory with regard to her movements roused Edith's ire, and with an affected little laugh, she said enthusiastically:

"Yes, indeed! Thank you so much for asking. I never enjoyed anything so thoroughly before, and Staines is quite the most delightful place in the world!"

Darcy bit his lip, and looked uncomfortable, but Edith went on in a sublimely patronising tone:

"I am afraid I must bid you good-bye, Mr. Thurland, as the shower is quite over, and my aunt will be expecting me. It is improbable that we shall meet again, so pray allow me to wish you every success in your future work," and with her grandest bow and most condescending smile, Edith marched out into the rain, which was still falling heavily, in spite of her assertion to the contrary.

Thus their love died at dawning, and its golden noontide glory had no place, save

in the mournful category of beautiful things that "might have been." Love of a stronger, nobler character would have been the salvation of either, but they had loved each other, and through weakness and inconstancy lost their great opportunity.

On Bank Holiday, last August, just as the sun was setting, fat, vulgar Mrs. Octavius Lilley found herself, for the second time in her life, under the limes in Trinity Gardens. Did not the time and place awake within her some tender thrill of recollection? Apparently they did, for having seated herself in the shade of the trees, and taken a little refreshment in the shape of a ham sandwich, she presently remarked to her husband, who stood close by with open mouth and guide-book:

"Only think, Octavius, I once came near marrying a penniless young tutor who made love to me in this very place. What fools girls are, to be sure!"

And Mr. and Mrs. Lilley joined in a hearty laugh.

BRIMSTONE PETE.

A STORY IN NINE CHAPTERS.

UNSADDLE, Willie, and let's lie down in the shade of these aspens. I've kept my story till you were old enough to understand it, so now make yourself easy while I trace out the scenes of the great tragedy that happened down there in the meadows. We're going to raise some ghosts.

CHAPTER I.

LOOK, my lad, I've brought out my mother's picture for you to see. You remember your poor old grandma? She was a Virginian, Willie, brought up from her childhood to believe in slavery as a divine institution—taught before she could walk to hate the devil and all abolitionists. When her father died of debt and worry, and the negroes were sold off by auction, she was left heiress of all that remained, a stony farm in the hills, a tumble-down homestead, and three slaves. She was a stern, quiet woman, with a dangerous temper, not the kind of girl one would have expected to marry, as she did, a man of no family, a northerner, and—what was worse—an abolitionist. They could never possibly be reconciled on the subject of slavery, which she regarded as a sacred

trust, a divine mission of the strong race to look after niggers, and he as a deadly sin that involved the reprobation of Heaven.

He was of Puritan stock, a strong, rough, handsome man, fond of fighting, drinking, and good company, a patriot who loved the Republic and detested slavery, a loving-hearted boy who laughed and enjoyed life like a giant. And mother? Well, perhaps she gradually found out that she hated the loud laughter and coarse strength of a man who wouldn't be bossed.

In 1855, when they married, nobody ever thought that the mere discussion of slavery could lead to civil war, yet it was only six years later that the whole South declared for Secession, and the North took up arms to maintain the unity of the Republic. The news from Harper's Ferry came like the lash of a whip that roused both sides to fury. At that time, being only a little chap, I didn't understand what all the fuss was about; but one incident I recall quite plainly—and I guess that while I'm in this world I won't have time to forget. Mother sat spinning late after sundown, but loth to waste candles; while I rolled on the hearthrug, keeping mighty still for fear of being sent off to bed. It was a sound that first scared me, a noise that swept up from the valley like the cheering of a crowd; then suddenly the door was flung open as if by a gust of wind. Father stood large in the doorway, black against the red glare behind him. It must have been a bonfire down by the creek, but I took the light to be flames breaking out from the world's inside. Father came in, slamming the door behind him, stood pale and stern by the window and looked about. Then his voice rang out masterful and almost triumphant.

"They've declared war!"

Mother rose, clutching at the table to support herself, and her voice sounded like a cry away off in the hills: "Pete! Pete! what are you going to do?"

He walked over to the hearth, took down his long rifle from over the chimney-piece, and grounded the butt.

"To help save the Union," he said, "and with Heaven's help to set the slaves free!"

Mother stood up erect and very white, her eyes glittering with anger. Twice, she tried to speak, but the words choked her. Then she regained her self-command, and with all her strength of will tried to compel his obedience.

"Put back that gun!"

For a moment I thought that his eyes would drop; but no, he only leant on the barrel wondering. Mother turned to me.

"Johnny—call in the slaves!" As I ran out she went over to the bureau where the family Bible lay, so that when I brought back the niggers we found her standing with hands on the open book. "Pete," she cried, "put back that gun I implore you—think of our child!"

There was a glitter of tears in his eyes, but he picked up the rifle and began cleaning it.

Then she cursed him over the book, in life, in death, and in eternity.

Father bowed his head, gathered up his powder and lead, and left the house; the slaves went grinning to their quarters; and afterwards, when the door closed creaking behind them, I heard a deep moan in the room. Mother had fainted.

At first we worked the old farm same as usual, but when the soldiers took our grey mare and the slaves ran away, the place went to weeds and ruin. We'd little to eat except poultry and potatoes, for our cow was shot by some skirmishers and there was no beast left for the plough. As for clothes, we had to get along with some old things of father's, so that when the war was over we'd scarcely a rag left. Mother used to make me cry, she looked so worn and sorrowful, reading the great Bible late at night, and moaning for father in her sleep. She'd stand in the doorway for hours with that lonesome, waiting look in her eyes, as she watched the high road. He never came. Often I'd get mad, for she was so harsh-tempered there was no bearing it; and at last, when I was fourteen, she told me to go away, for she couldn't abide me in the house. Uncle Ned, she allowed, had promised me work on his farm. I took it coolly enough, leaving her without so much as a kiss, though my heart was aching fit to burst. That night when I unpacked my grip in Uncle Ned's garret, I found this little picture of her wrapped up carefully in a sock, and here inside the case a slip of paper with a scrawl in pencil across it: "Don't forget me, Johnnie. I love you still." The paper was damp.

It was full fifteen miles down to home, but I walked there that night through the rain. The doors were open, the old house was empty, the rats were scampering about the floor. The curse had come home to roost.

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE NED put me on one of his farms up in the hills, let me go to night-school, and, seeing the place was thick with field vermin, gave me a gun. To hit anything with that old weapon was a matter for honest pride, but it taught me enough shooting to handle the worst rifle on earth and kill at sight. Time passed. I grew to be a man, clean-limbed, strong as a colt. As to the dear old deacon, he'd promised me a good team and a new waggon loaded for travel if I'd serve five years. When the time came he handed me as fine an outfit as you'd see in all Virginia. "Take that, my lad," said he, "but if you've a mind to stay, I'll throw in a farm."

At that time I wouldn't have hung around home for a million a year. I was nineteen, the big West was before me, and out there, somewhere towards sunset, maybe my father. I gave the old deacon a hearty handshake, jumped aboard my waggon, lashed up the team, and started out without another thought straight towards the sundown. To my shame, Willie, I knew well enough that mother was working herself to death as cook in a lumber camp, yet I never even had the grace to say good-bye.

It was in the fall of 1874 when I struck the end of the settlements. In those days Bismarck, Dakota, was the last town up the Missouri River, the jumping-off place for the buffalo plains of the Sioux. The town was wild and rough, though I guess that I wasn't much better myself; for since I left Virginia I'd learned to swear pretty hard, besides drinking and gambling as though I'd never been taught decent ways to home. If I tell you I was a young fool, Willie, it's only just to warn you off my trail.

There was a man in town, a California miner, Brimstone Pete by name, who'd just made a pretty big strike in the Black Hills. So far as appearances went, a gentler man never lived; but people used to say that Pete was not a man to be fooled with. In those days it was a big compliment for an old frontiersman to take notice of a mere tenderfoot like me, and I naturally expected that such a man would think no more of me than if I was tending bar. It was hearing my name called that first drew Pete's attention; and although I'd no idea why he should seek me out, I was mighty proud of being seen that night in his company. After that we got to be quite chummy, so that he'd tell me war yarns by the hour, or put me up to all

sorts of tips in prospecting, woodcraft, and dealing with the tribes. He even took an interest in my past life, getting me to tell him of mother and the farm just as if it was worth listening to. I never guessed why.

Since I'd met Pete I was much too proud to associate with boys of my own age, but I'd no idea what an influence he was gaining over me. He looked as rough as a bear, yet he always seemed to think it worth his while to be kind and polite. He knew more than all the crowd put together, yet he was always readier to listen than to talk. He slung his money about with both hands; I'd catch him doing little acts of kindness just as if they were crimes; he was the most religious man at heart I ever knew, yet from his talk he might have been the devil. He said swearing was foolish, so I quit; while as to drinking, I was ashamed to let him think I'd no head for liquor, so I kept sober. Somehow I got after a while to resent his fatherly manners, sulked because I thought he was treating me as a child, and took to hating him. I drank, gambled, and swore harder than ever, just to show him I didn't care for his mollicoddling—in fact, Willie, I behaved for all the world like a raging jackass. So it happened that one night, being in the Black Hills Saloon half drunk, I got into a "scrap" with the bar-tender, and just out of my own foolishness had to fight. My revolver missed fire, the room swung round me and grew black as I stood with my head bent down waiting for death. Then I heard dear old Pete laughing at me. I looked up to find the bar-tender sprawling on the floor, while my friend stood rolling him about with one foot, and laughing at me. Of course, every one could see he'd saved my life, but I wasn't going to let on that I cared, so I sauntered up to the bar and called drinks for the crowd. The gin-slinger, too scared to speak, went back to his bottles; and when all the glasses were filled Pete's health was drunk with cheers. Pete lifted up his liquor when I did, but as we clinked glasses the dear old man stared hard into my eyes. I felt that but for their holding me I should fall, my will weakened, my pride ebbd away, then I awakened to find Pete's glass shattered all to pieces at my feet. Still his eyes held me, but, mine drooped, for I couldn't face him—down went my glass with a crash.

"Right you are," said he. "Steer clear of such truck. You're too good a lad to

fill a drunkard's grave." But for him I'd be a poor, broken-down sot to-day.

Pete wanted to break me of gambling; but that's a hard thing to do, for when a lad once starts playing away his savings it takes a tremendous stroke of fate to bring him back to reason. He knew that all the money I made at my freighting went straight to the faro tables; and he brought me up short that very night.

"Come, my boy," said he; "sit down right here and we'll have some fun. Barkeep, a deck of cards." He took the pack and slapped it down between us. "Now," said he, "the stakes is my three thousand dollars in dust agin your waggon and team."

"Done," said I.

"Make out the order on your team," said he. I wrote and signed on a leaf of his pocket-book, he doing the same. "Highest cut wins," said Pete.

"Hold on," said I, "the stakes ain't even. I'm not putting down enough."

"What have you that you set value on?"

I showed him mother's picture and told him I'd stake it against nothing less than life. He winced. "Put it by, my boy," said he very gravely; then, turning to the cards, cried: "Cut."

"Highest cut goes," said I, and cut a deuce.

"Highest goes," he whispered as he cut ten. Then he glanced up in my face, and I thought that when he spoke it sounded more like a cry. "Boy, you've the devil's own grit. I love you. See, lad, I was only trying your mettle. Take back that waggon and team as a gift from me, and just let me see that 'ere portrait once again."

I stuck my revolver to his head and pointed at the stakes.

"Take up that paper," said I, "or I'll drop you. What kind of sucking infant d'ye take me for?"

He covered his face with his hands.

"Boy," he whispered, "you have shamed me."

I turned on my heel and went out into the open air, cured of drinking and gambling in one evening. Next day I was told that Pete wanted me; but he was too late. I'd enlisted in the Seventh Cavalry.

CHAPTER III.

A GRAND regiment, Willie! Custer was our idol, our hero; one of the most magnificent frontiersmen that ever lived. The Sioux used to call him Sun Child because of his long golden hair and buck-

skin clothes. A dandy, you see—a fop—but a great Indian fighter for all that. We knew well in the ranks that with all his dare-devil courage he was as wary as a fox, and we didn't like him the less for his sharp discipline, because he was a gentleman, treating all alike.

There'd got to be a war. Every time the Government had broken faith, the Indians had given us a thrashing. Thanks to our precious Indian Department, the Sioux were better armed than the United States troops; besides, if they got worsted they could fall back on the Bad Lands where we daresn't follow—yes, man for man, horse for horse, weapon for weapon, the Sioux were almost ashamed to be seen fighting with us.

General Crook got such a thrashing in March that he couldn't see straight; but instead of sailing in to smash up the Indian programme we just did nothing, so that when we took the field in July, Sitting Bull had managed to get together the very biggest force of savages ever seen on the Plains. Well, at last we moved out from Bismarck, General Terry in command, and, marching up the Yellowstone Valley, the main body camped at the mouth of the Bighorn, while Custer was sent out south to find the Indians. A forced march of three days brought us to the banks of the Little Bighorn River. At noon of July the twenty-fifth, 1875, we surprised old Sitting Bull in camp. General Custer split up the regiment into three battalions—Jackson's and his own to attack, Bradshaw to bring up the mule train. As for me, I was in the second battalion as Major Jackson's trumpeter.

Now, Willie, look—I've brought you to the very spot from which we first saw the great Sioux camp. That river down on the left is the Little Bighorn, running off to the northward, and on the far bank, straggling along the meadow for nearly four miles, was Sitting Bull's encampment. The plan was that Custer should move down behind those hills on the right, to attack at the lower ford, while our battalion kept the enemy amused by crossing the river here. Well, as soon as Custer had started we rode down this bank at a sharp trot, splashed across the stream, and scrambled out dripping on the other side. Do you see that clump of timber away off about two miles across the meadows? Yes, that's where we sheltered our horses when our skirmish line met the Sioux. There was a camp about three hundred

yards ahead of us, and above the tepees we could see the dust-cloud of thousands of Indians coming up at full gallop to charge. Still there wasn't much to keep us interested near by, except a little desultory shooting from under the tents. I heard one of our scouts call out that it was no use wasting lead at long range, for we'd get a better chance by-and-by.

While he spoke, out came the Sioux from behind the tepees. They came along crouched on the necks of their ponies, flogging away with their whips, shooting into the air, yelling like demons. The dust-cloud was full of thundering hoofs, gleaming naked men, waving feathers, flashing guns, and the scream of a cyclone. The Major just went off his head with the excitement. "Prepare to mount!" he yelled, and I sounded the order; so instead of firing a volley we had to fall back like a lot of fools into the timber. The savages were surrounding us by thousands, so that we could have shot them all to bits without losing a man if Jackson hadn't gone crazy; but just as our boys were getting the feel of their rifles, the Major yelled out: "Mount!"

We threw ourselves cursing into our saddles.

"Dismount!" yelled Jackson; and I had to sound the call.

Bullets were whistling in from our rear, so that any man in his senses would have known that we were shut in on every side.

"Mount!" screamed Jackson. By that time the whole crowd was mad enough to kill him—and it would have been a merciful act to put the poor creature out of his misery. An officer rode up to him.

"Shall we charge through them?" he said.

"Yes," wailed Jackson. So, as we cleared the timber, I sounded the "Charge!"

Men were reeling dead in their saddles, horses floundering over thrown riders, the smoke thick as a fog, the roar like a dozen earthquakes, and I rode at the head of the column by Jackson's side. My revolver blazed away in my hand, missing horses, men, earth, and heaven, but I was as happy as a kitten, feeling my horse leap under me, glad of my strength, and trying my best to kill. Then the girth smashed, the saddle went from under, my charger

floundered, my trumpet flung up into the sun—and there I lay in the trail of dead and dying, under the plunging horses as the Indian pursuit swept by. Rifle gone, horse shot, pistol empty, I snatched a full revolver from the stiffening hand of a sergeant, and joined a dozen more luckless unhorsed men to fight nine hundred mounted Sioux in the open. Shoulder to shoulder, gaining a stride at a time, stumbling over dead bodies, blinded with smoke and dust, we worked our way back to the timber. It was only a little way, and Indians too impatient for good targets, for they were keen to be off at a gallop after our flying command. I bowled over a yelling, bragging buck Indian who tried to ride me down; then, within a second, it seemed, our big fight was over, and we crawled under shelter of the trees.

Dead tired, we all lay down to watch the Indians as they wheeled, and galloped after Jackson. The shattered column was reeling across towards the ford, the Sioux, ten to one, pouring in a murderous fire. When they floundered down at last behind the river bank we got fairly sick with suspense, for it seemed as if they'd never, any of them, come up on the further side. At last we saw them, panting and straining up the slope, with Indians neck and neck abreast on either side, and fairly swarming in the rear. It didn't look much like our smart battalion—that broken, frantic mob, scrambling up yon ridge to the top. Do you see the brow of the round hill—there where it's all bare gravel? That's where they turned to face the enemy. But there was no enemy; the Indians had seen Bradshaw coming up with his rear-guard and the mules, thought they were trapped in an ambush, and turned tail back across the river. They'd other game to hunt, for Custer at that moment was forcing the lower ford, so that the Sioux needed every man they had to contest his passage.

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